

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUNICH 00546 271601Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUNICH 00546

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EXDIS

EUR FOR LUERS AND SEYMOUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN
SUBJECT: RFE/RL MANAGEMENT REACTS NEGATIVELY TO BIB
OFFER OF RIGHT OF REPLY

REF; STATE 16738

1. INTRO AND SUMMARY. BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL
BROADCASTING'S OFFER TO GIVE SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
GOVERNMENTS BROADCAST TIME FOR RIGHT OF REPLY TO
SPECIFIC RFE/RL PROGRAMS HAS GENERATED STRONG NEGATIVE
REACTION ON PART OF TOP MANAGEMENT OF RFE/RL OPERATION
HERE. RFE/RL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND OPERATING OFFICER
BUCHAN HAS JUST SENT TELEX REQUESTING THAT RFE/RL, INC.
BOARD CHAIRMAN HAYES REVIEW IMPLICATIONS OF BIB OFFER
WITH BIB CHAIRMAN GRONOUSKI. THE DIRECTORS OF RFE'S FIVE
BROADCAST DEPARTMENTS HAVE SENT LETTER TO GRONOUSKI
COMPLAINING ABOUT BIB'S FAILURE TO CONSULT OR AT LEAST
INFORM RFE/RL MANAGEMENT OF THIS "MAJOR
NEW DEPARTURE." END SUMMARY.

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2. IN VIEW OF PUBLICITY SURROUNDING BIB OFFER TO GIVE
SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, UNDER AGREED
CONDITIONS, BROADCAST TIME TO RIGHT OF REPLY TO SPECIFIC
RFE/RL PROGRAMS, CONGEN LIAISON OFFICER SHARED CONTENTS OF
REFTTEL WITH RFE/RL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BUCHAN AND HIS
TWO TOP LIEUTENANTS. THE JANUARY 23 BINDER ARTICLE IN
NY TIMES AND JANUARY 24 WASHINGTON POST STORY QUOTING BIB

STAFFER SHUB HAD GENERATED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN AND CURIOSITY AMONG TOP RFE/RL OFFICIALS HERE. RFE/RL MANAGEMENT WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET BY PASSAGE OF POST ARTICLE QUOTING SHUB AS SAYING IT WOULD BE UP TO BIB TO DETERMINE WHICH COMPLAINTS FROM EE GOVERNMENTS HAVE MERIT.

3. EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON BUCHAN SENT TELETYPE TO RFE/RL, INC. BOARD CHAIRMAN HAYES (IN CARE OF RFE/RL VICE PRES. WALTER) ASSERTING THAT INSTRUCTIONS TO EMBASSIES CONTAINED IN REFTEL AS WELL AS COMMENTARY BY BIB STAFFER SHUB SEEM TO BE IN CONTRADICTION TO OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES OF RFE/RL, INC. BUCHAN STATED FURTHER THAT THESE INSTRUCTIONS SEEM TO DISTORT EXISTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG STATE DEPARTMENT, BIB AND RFE/RL MANAGEMENT. HE NOTED THAT THIS "SWEEPING CHANGE IN GROUND RULES" WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION OR NOTIFICATION HAS CAUSED "SERIOUS CONCERN" ON PART OF KEY RFE/RL PERSONNEL HERE, AND URGED THAT HAYES REVIEW THIS MATTER WITH GRONOUSKI PERSONALLY.

4. IN LETTER TO BIB CHAIRMAN GRONOUSKI DATED JANUARY 26, DIRECTORS OF RFE'S FIVE BROADCAST DEPARTMENTS HAVE LABELED THE BIB OFFER "A MAJOR NEW DEPARTURE," AND COMPLAINED THAT IT WAS MADE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH OR NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR RFE PROGRAMMING. (N.B. THE FIVE DIRECTORS FEAR THAT IF CONFIDENTIAL

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EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WERE TO TAKE BIB UP ON ITS OFFER, CONTROL OF PROGRAMMING WOULD BE GRADUALLY TURNED OVER TO BIB AND DEPARTMENT.)

5. IN ATTEMPT TO ALLAY CONCERNS OF RFE/RL EMPLOYEES HERE, BUCHAN HAS POSTED ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH OBSERVES THAT BIB CHAIRMAN GRONOUSKI'S SUGGESTION WAS MADE IN CONNECTION WITH DISCUSSION OF JAMMING OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS OF RFE/RL, AND THAT IT DID NOT REPRESENT OPEN-ENDED OFFER BY U.S. GOVERNMENT TO OFFICIALS OF EASTERN EUROPE FOR AIR TIME OVER RFE/RL. ANNOUNCEMENT INDICATES THAT GRONOUSKI'S SUGGESTION WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THE CESSATION OF JAMMING. IN CONCLUSION, ANNOUNCEMENT INDICATES THAT DECISIONS ON WHETHER SPECIFIC RESPONSES FROM EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR BROADCAST WILL REST WITH THE RADIOS.

6. COMMENT. CONGEN'S ANALYSIS OF IMPLICATIONS OF REFTEL IS CONTAINED IN GILMORE-LUERS LETTER DATED JANUARY 26. THIS LETTER CONCLUDES THAT IF THE SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS OF SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WERE TO BE CONVEYED TO BIB VIA U.S. MISSIONS IN USSR AND EASTERN

EUROPE, EMBASSIES WOULD INEVITABLY BEGIN TO COMMENT ON
THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS' COMPLAINTS.
THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN PRESENT
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE RFE/RL
OPERATION. BETTS

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